

Wildlife is Everywhere!

Study Units

Unit 1: Iowa's Wildlife Resource Base

Supplemental Information

Wildlife can be found in every part of our state. Iowa still has some high quality, diverse habitats—forests, prairies, and wetlands—each supporting a wide variety of wildlife. You must visit natural areas to see certain species of wildlife, but many others are right where we live—in window sills or the backyard, on a city building, or at the edge of a crop field.

People and wildlife share environments. Many of Iowa's animals have adapted well to human activities such as farming and urban development. Some species have benefited by living near humans (e.g., white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbit, coyote, and raccoon, all do well in urban and agricultural settings). Peregrine falcons thrive on tall buildings in cities, eating pigeons, starlings, and house sparrows.

See the background information for *Unit 1* to review definitions of wild, domestic, tame, and feral animals.

Teaching Suggestions

It is a good idea to help younger students define a “wild” animal. List characteristics on the board to help them differentiate between wild and domestic animals. (The class hamster should not be on their list of wild animals in the classroom.)

Wildlife is everywhere. It is important for students to understand that, while they may not always see an animal, there are signs that tell them an animal has been there. Look for things like chewed materials, bits of seeds or other food, spider webs, cocoons, and feces (a sure sign something has been there!)

Review the *Guide to Animal Signs* before a class search for animal signs. Use the *Whose Clues? Worksheet* to record what you find. Animals may not leave very obvious signs (sometimes they leave only scent). Make sure students use senses besides sight—listen for wildlife, sniff the air, etc. Some common wildlife students may find are: cottontail rabbits, fox squirrels, snakes, earth worms, spiders, ground squirrels, songbirds, opossums, raccoons, and assorted insects.

Evaluation

See the activity.

Student Materials

Guide to Animal Signs
Whose Clues? Worksheet

Teacher Aids

None

Additional Materials

Field guides to animal tracks and scat.
Posters or pictures of common wildlife, make sure to include invertebrates.

Guide to Animal Signs



Whose Clues? Worksheet

1. List or draw pictures of the wildlife in your classroom with you and clues they left.

animal:

clues:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

2. List or draw pictures of the wild animals that live in the school yard and the clues they left.

animal:

clues:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

3. List the clues you found with the sense you used to find them.

We saw:

We heard:

We felt:

We could smell:

4. Which animals were using things made by people for part of their habitat?